



# The Crossley Heath School

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To all our Year 11 and Year 13 Students,

These are clearly extraordinary circumstances that we find ourselves in. The word “unprecedented” seems to be used in every news report and article we see or read – this certainly is the case. The staff here at Crossley Heath are working extremely hard to keep on top of developments and that includes with the outcome of the news that the examinations are cancelled this summer.

## Your Exam Grades

We know that many of you are feeling anxious about your GCSE or A level grades in the absence of the summer examinations. This is understandable and perfectly natural. Try to see the ‘big picture’ and trust that over the coming weeks and months everything will get sorted out.

You already know, via announcements made, by the government and various exam boards that it is likely your grades will be ‘calculated’ based on a range of available evidence and that school is likely to be asked for an indicative or ‘predicted’ grade – they have started to refer to this as a teacher assessment. All the announcements say that JCQ will be providing schools with further information and instructions about how this is to be done in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the grades are fair and reliable. We do not yet have access to the additional information and even when it comes through, we will need some time to process it and develop our instructions for your teachers and department leaders. The following link outlines the information we have:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>

Each of the exam boards are also releasing information as they get it. Here is the latest from AQA as an example:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/coronavirus-updates>

We are asking you to be patient and not to contact your teachers about mock or predicted grades. We know you need reassurance but we do not want to provide any misleading or incorrect information, given that we do not yet know what data will be requested or how it will be used. Teachers will not be replying to requests for confirmation of predictions or for reconsideration of grades so please do not ask at this stage.

*An “Outstanding” School – Ofsted*

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## **Completing Work Set**

In terms of doing the work that has been set, our advice remains the same. Do what you are asked, across all subjects, to the best of your ability until we tell you otherwise. If, at any point, we think you should be changing tack and doing something different, we will let you know. In your assemblies last week the reasons for this advice were given:

- Learning for its own sake is a good thing and, if you can learn without the pressure of exams, enjoy it.
- You need to be prepared for next year – this does not mean ditching subjects that you are discontinuing but working really hard in order to address any weaknesses in all of your subjects.
- It is entirely possible that coursework will be in the mix in any grade ‘calculation’ so if it is still going on, please ensure it is completed by the deadline. Do not return to work that has already been finally submitted.
- It might be the case that we are able to set additional tasks that contribute to the teacher assessment grades.
- If, for any reason, you are not happy with your final ‘calculated grade’, the exam boards have suggested that an exam early next academic year may be available to you. If you do not continue to work, you will put yourself at an immediate disadvantage as your peers will be better prepared.
- We all need to work together – by carrying on and doing all that is asked of you, you are doing your bit not only for your own good but as a way of showing your support for your teachers who are developing the resources for you.

## **Entry to Sixth Form – Y11**

Y11, you will have received a letter regarding progression into the Crossley Heath Sixth Form in the last few days. We hope that this will have provided some much needed security for most of you. We acknowledge there are a small number who will be troubled by the cancellation of GCSEs as your predicted grades do not meet one or more of our requirements. Some of you have been advised to have a backup plan in place which is still a very sensible idea. We cannot yet comment on the position for those of you who have an offer with a reserve subject in place and need to wait for the government clarification on predicted grades before we make any decisions. Our advice would be to accept your offer(s) in order to give maximum flexibility in the coming months.

## **UCAS – Y13**

The latest information we have regarding applications to university are that the system will run as normal this year. We have already heard a number of universities are changing some of their offers of places to unconditional. Please don’t feel rushed into decisions at this stage, the Universities have very clearly been asked not to do this – I have included an update from UCAS at the end of this letter.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your efforts, your patience, and your resilience in these times. Take care, stay home wherever possible and support your families and friends as best as you can.

Yours faithfully

Lynnette Cassidy

Headteacher

### **Update from UCAS, Universities UK, and the Office for Students – Friday 20 March 2020**

Following recent government announcements from across the UK, we want to reassure students, teachers, universities, and colleges that all of the key organisations involved in the UK HE undergraduate admissions process are working flat out to flex and adapt the admissions cycle.

We know this is a very stressful time for applicants, and that recent uncertainty has also put considerable pressure on admissions teams across the country.

Our aim is to ensure it continues to be efficient, fair, and in the best interest of all students, even in the face of these unprecedented circumstances. We are all working together and committed to make this happen. We want to share with you what we know as of today, and hope you will appreciate all the answers are not immediately available.

Following announcements, we do know that the admissions timetable will run similarly to previous years, and that all students in England will be awarded a calculated grade for any exam they were entered for. We anticipate similar arrangements will apply to the rest of the UK.

In line with the recent announcements, we have confidence that universities and colleges will be flexible when making their admissions decisions and do all they can to support students. While universities are autonomous institutions, we expect them to play their part in maintaining the integrity of the system. We ask you to avoid moving to blanket unconditional or other offers that could disadvantage students in their current decision making and future success and undermine the necessary emergency measures put in place. All universities and colleges need to work to take collective responsibility in these very challenging times and put the entire student cohort's interest first.

The following has been provided by Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Universities:

*“We want to assure students that grades will be equally as valid as those in previous years, and their hard work will be rewarded and fairly recognised.*

*“I am pleased Universities UK has confirmed institutions will be flexible and do all they can to support students to progress to higher education.*

*“There is no reason for the usual admissions cycle to be disrupted. Universities should not begin making their offers unconditional, and applicants should not feel pressured to accept such offers as they will be awarded a formal calculated grade.”*

We have written to all teachers and advisers to ensure we maintain regular communication and have daily updates for all applicants. Further guidance following the announcement around alternative assessment methods will be provided in coming days.

We remain committed to communicating with you as soon as we have information, so please keep your email details up-to-date.

Take care

Clare Marchant  
Chief Executive  
UCAS

Alistair Jarvis  
Chief Executive  
Universities UK

Nicola Dandridge  
Chief Executive  
Office for Students

Please note the Office for Students has also issued a statement which can be found [here](#).